Innovative initiatives to gauge the student experience in an undergraduate Bachelor of Nursing programme

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Abstract
A key factor in the success of higher education institutions is their ability to appreciate student experience and integrate this awareness into the generation of institutional priorities (Poindexter 2006). Australian universities annually administer a number of surveys that are designed to collect data about the student experience. Universities receive detailed reports presenting the findings from these surveys. These reports are disseminated to faculties and schools and provide different insights and have varying degrees of significance to the multiple stakeholders. However, evidence suggests that the utilisation and informed strategic action in response to this valuable information is limited (Neumann 2000).

Keywords
bachelor, programme, innovative, undergraduate, experience, nursing, student, gauge, initiatives

Disciplines
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4.2 Enhancing the student experience

4.2.1 Innovative initiatives to gauge the student experience in an undergraduate Bachelor of Nursing programme

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Abstract

A key factor in the success of higher education institutions is their ability to appreciate student experience and integrate this awareness into the generation of institutional priorities (Poindexter 2006). Australian universities annually administer a number of surveys that are designed to collect data about the student experience. Universities receive detailed reports presenting the findings from these surveys. These reports are disseminated to faculties and schools and provide different insights and have varying degrees of significance to the multiple stakeholders. However, evidence suggests that the utilisation and informed strategic action in response to this valuable information is limited (Neumann 2000).

In the Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences (HBS) at the University of Wollongong, the information gleaned from such survey reports have been the foundation for a broader, more comprehensive evaluative process. This evaluative process has been designed to ascertain student experience and in doing so inform future learning and teaching priorities, policy and practice. This paper will showcase the evaluative process that was developed to not only determine student experience but also triangulate the data and findings and thereby provide a more meaningful and sound basis from which future planning, in regard to learning and teaching, could be established.

The key to the developed process was the explicit engagement of students through focus groups, polls and student forums. The innovative approaches that were adopted in the facilitation of these focus groups, polls and student forums and suggestions for ensuring the success of such approaches are highlighted in this paper. The school and faculty strategic plans that transpired as a result of this evaluative process are testament to the value and impact that such an initiative can have. This paper will provide some examples of the strategic actions that resulted as a consequence of this student experience initiative.

Intended learning outcomes

At the end of this session, participants should be able to:

• present a synopsis of an evaluative process that was designed to generate a comprehensive perspective of student experience in an undergraduate Nursing program
• describe the innovative approaches that were adopted in facilitating student focus groups, polls and forums and suggestions for ensuring the success of these
• provide illustrations of how strategic actions can be informed by student experience data.

Recommended reading
• Scott, G 2006, Accessing the student voice: Using CEQuery to identify what retains and promotes engagement in productive learning in Australian higher education, DEST, Canberra.

Biography
Dr Dominique Parrish in her role, has responsibility for Faculty learning and teaching strategy, policy and practice and enhancing student experience, outcomes and engagement. She has lead numerous initiatives designed to promote equitable and positive student learning experiences and sound learning and teaching practices. Dominique has over 25 years experience working in the education sector and a wealth of practical experience in adult education. Dominique founded Learning Achievements and Solutions, a business that delivered services including policy and resource development, strategic planning workshops, online learning and web-based training, project management and organisational research such as staff and client satisfaction reviews.